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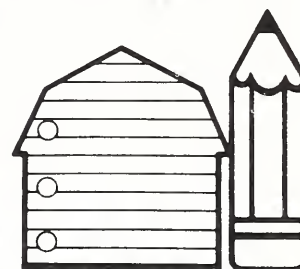


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# Ag in the Classroom

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

## Notes



A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact: Shirley Traxler, Director, Room 234-W, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. 202/447-5727

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## New York Tests New Binders

The old adage: "Tell me, I'll forget; show me, I may remember; but involve me, and I'll understand," is the philosophy that guides New York's Ag in the Classroom Task Force in the development of its new ag binders.

The New York binder set includes three 3-inch notebooks designed for use in grades 4, 5 and 6. Each binder is chock-full of materials that follow New York's syllabus.

The binders include ag-related exercises in the form of crossword puzzles, stories, word searches, worksheets, experiments and composition ideas. All the activities are designed to contribute to the teaching of language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics. To simplify teaching, student materials are color-coded according to subject matter, while teacher materials and answer keys are white. Also, the major concept covered in an activity sheet is listed at the top of each page.

"The materials are designed for 'hands on' student involvement," said Betty Wolanyk, the project materials and curriculum director. "In order to make sure that teachers would use the ag binders, we conducted a nationwide survey of Ag in the Classroom volunteers to discover which materials would be most useful for teachers," said Wolanyk.

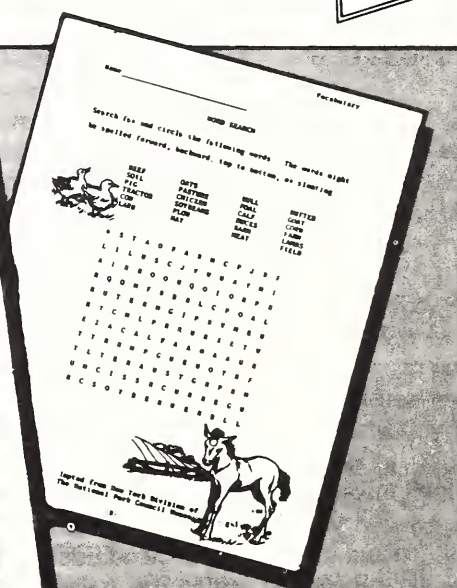
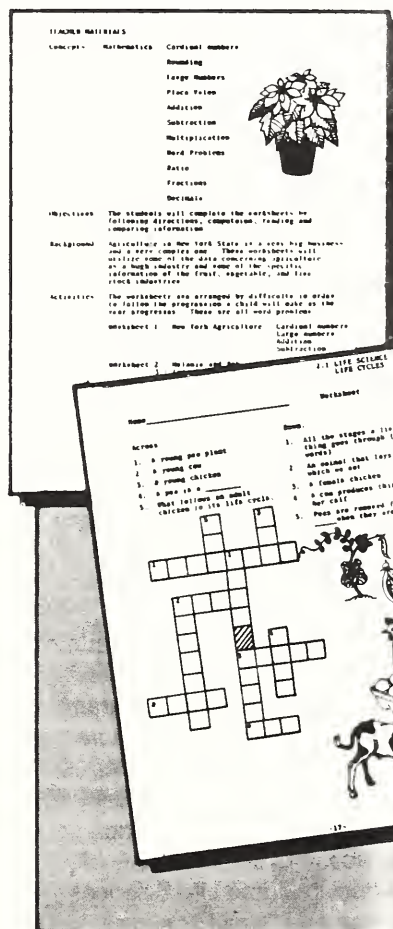
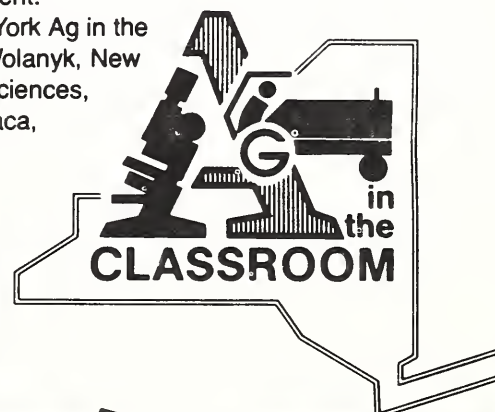
Currently, the binders are being piloted in Syracuse, Penn Yan, Binghamton, Albany, New York City, Buffalo and two counties on Long Island. Although the first deadline for teacher response to the materials is February 10th, Wolanyk said that she already feels positive about the impact of the project. "Feedback from county contacts has been great. People have been very enthusiastic about it."

A support network has also been set up to train teachers to use the new curriculum materials.

Wolanyk is being assisted in this project by fellow project directors Dr. Daryle E. Foster and Bill Umscheid, who are the project's funding and organization directors. The New York Ag in the

Classroom program is a joint effort of the New York Farm Bureau, Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and the New York State Education Department.

For more information about New York Ag in the Classroom binders, contact Betty Wolanyk, New York State College of Ag and Life Sciences, Cornell University, 3 Stone Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853; or call (607) 255-8122.



New York's new ag binders  
include word searches, puzzles  
and various ag-related exercises.

## Industrial Crop Project

American Agriwomen(AAW), a national coalition of farm, ranch and agri-business women, is working to encourage junior and senior high school students to base science fair projects on industrial crops through an industrial crop project.

"We want to teach students that agriculture includes growing crops for industrial purposes, not just for food and fiber," said Jean Ibendahl, AAW's Ag in the Classroom coordinator.

Industrial crops produce materials used in the manufacturing of epoxies, waxes, nylons, paper, adhesives and lubricants.

"The industrial crop project," according to Ibendahl, "offers opportunities to experiment, observe,

question, analyze and formulate answers...all requirements for a science fair project.

"The project also serves to increase knowledge about agriculture, and fosters an appreciation for agriculture as a business. New crops breed new markets—which is good for farmers. We want students to explore the opportunities awaiting both the producer and the consumer as industrial crops, and the resulting economy, develop."

Some industrial crops will be ready for commercial production within the next five years, Ibendahl noted. "The result will be new career opportunities in agronomy, engineering, animal science, horticulture, entomology and forestry," she said.

AAW is awarding prizes to students for science projects about industrial crops in the 1986-87 school year, including the opportunity to apply for an apprenticeship at a local USDA Agricultural Research Station.

For more information, contact Jean Ibendahl, Route 1 Box 12, Tamaroa, Illinois 62888.

In an industrial crop project, students could learn how a tire was made from a twig.



### Focus on Industrial Crops

#### Science Fair Project Ideas:

- Determine germination rates for seeds.
- Dissect seeds. Identify parts. Compare several seeds.
- Determine the best plant population for maximum growth.
- Experiment with fertilizers.
- What is the penetrating power of roots through barriers?
- How does temperature affect growth?

## Vermont "Partners" Spread the Word

In Vermont, Ag in the Classroom is a partnership.

The partnership, as described by co-coordinators Megan Camp and Gerald Fuller is "a consortium of groups, organizations, agencies and individuals interested in working with classroom teachers who seek help to integrate agriculture into the school curriculum." Its purpose is to help students gain an awareness and understanding of the role of agriculture in every-day life, in society, in the economy, and in the total environment.

"We seek to provide elementary and secondary teachers with easy access to agricultural and educational resources that will enrich their existing curriculums," said Fuller.

Organizations involved in the Vermont program include: the Vermont Departments of Agriculture and Education, Community Agricultural Center, Inc., Farm Bureau, 4-H, Merck Forest and Farmland Center, Shelburne Farms Resources, Inc., Soil Conservation Service, and the University of Vermont College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and College of Education and Social Sciences.

In order to encourage other groups and individuals to join the Vermont network of volunteers, Vermont Ag in the Classroom is initiating a membership drive. A display at the October statewide teachers' conference was the first activity in the drive.



Vermont teachers make friends with a heifer calf.

Massachusetts Ag in the Classroom's apple and cider booth at the Eastern State's Exposition in West Springfield proved to be not only a means to financially boost the state's Ag in the Classroom program, but also a good way to communicate Ag's goals to the general public. The annual exposition, which is nicknamed the Big E, attracts nearly 2 million people during its 12-day run.

Marjorie Cooper, of Massachusetts Ag in the Classroom said, "Massachusetts Ag in the Classroom has always worked through principals and school superintendents—the Big E proved to be a great place to expose individuals to the Ag in the Classroom program." The Ag booth was housed in the Massachusetts Building, which was modeled after the first state house.

The volunteers not only sold apples and cider, but disseminated information about Ag in the Classroom. Such materials as SPICE brochures, Ag in the Classroom bookmarks, and information sheets on the apple industry were passed out to the public. Also, the Massachusetts Ag in the Classroom curriculum binder was available.

Funds obtained from the booth will be used for spring teacher workshops and for continued development of Massachusetts Ag in the Classroom curriculum binders for Kindergarten through 3rd graders.

Since the program was pilot tested in 15 schools in 1984, the Massachusetts Ag in the Classroom program has grown to now include 165 teachers in

approximately 100 Massachusetts schools. Marjorie Cooper said that the upcoming spring teacher workshops will add at least 10 more teachers to Massachusetts Ag in the Classroom.

For more information about Massachusetts Ag in the Classroom, write Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom, Hills North, Room 420, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003; or call (413) 545-4645.

Al Peckham, Treasurer of Massachusetts Ag, sets up the apple and cider booth at the Big E.



## Idaho Teachers Make the Connection

Several dozen Idaho teachers gathered at Idaho State University (ISU) last fall for a seminar on incorporating farm-related issues into regular classroom studies.

Sponsored by the Idaho Council on Economic Education and the Idaho Department of Agriculture, the seminar started with a discussion of the economic and social problems facing Idaho farmers.

"We hope to make these teachers more aware of farmers' problems and help them devise ways of integrating these issues into the classroom," said Gerald F. Draayer, executive director of the council.

Rick Phillips, assistant to the director of the Idaho Department of Agriculture, then demonstrated how role-playing can simplify difficult economic concepts.

Three teachers played the roles of a farmer, a banker, and a foreign country's trade official. The teachers role-played several scenarios that represented falling prices for a bushel of wheat, and the effect of a strong dollar on foreign trade.

The results of the role-playing showed that American farmers are getting less for their produce, while cheaper foreign imports are encouraged.

Participants agreed this exercise could be an

effective means of bringing farm problems home to students.

"Our aim is to teach non-farm people about farming and at the same time instill a greater sense of pride in the children of farm families," said Phillips.

Wayne Cole, Franklin County extension agent, demonstrated how he had elementary school students make bread. First, he provided the students ingredients and a bag for mixing. "After a pinch of floury mess and a dash of relevant information, students were able to make a connection between the bread they eat and the wheat their neighboring farmers grow," said Cole.

A representative of the Idaho Beef Council showed a film strip called "Shaping A Nation" and an education kit that are available to teachers to explain the role that industry plays in America.

Attendants found the seminar both informative and practical. Some remarked that they felt newly prepared to introduce complex ideas into the classroom. Dr. Roger Rankin, ISU professor and director of the Center of Economic Education at ISU, said the center offers credit courses to teachers and others to help bring economics to the classroom, and also provides a reference resource to teachers.

# Spotlight

## Spotlight on Connecticut's Tom Duncan



Tom Duncan, Connecticut Ag in the Classroom Coordinator, urges other retirees to get involved in the Ag program.

A lot of energy behind the new Connecticut Ag in the Classroom program comes from its coordinator, Dr. Thomas Duncan. A retired educational administrator, Duncan is a strong leader of Connecticut's Ag program.

"I'm retired and find this a very worthwhile endeavor," said Duncan. It's a program that semi-retirees can easily get involved in."

Although a relative newcomer to agriculture, Duncan draws on a wealth of educational experience. In addition to his duties as Connecticut Ag in the Classroom Coordinator, he also serves as Center Director at Southern Connecticut University Center for Economic Education. He was Director of the Parent/Child Home Visitation program for handicapped and developmentally delayed children, in which he helped children overcome their disabilities. As Educational Publication Executive Editor at Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, he was directly responsible for publication of the Bookmark Reading Series and My Weekly Reader. He also has 12 years teaching experience (elementary through high school) and 6 years teacher education experience.

David Nisely, of Connecticut Ag in the Classroom, said of Duncan, "With his background, credentials, leadership role and dynamic personality, he is the best person to get the program into the schools. We are lucky to have him aboard."

To get plans under way, Duncan coordinated a leadership training workshop, which was held in June. During the two-day workshop, 10 people were taught to be staff trainers. Topics covered in the workshop included: the importance of agriculture awareness activities, community resources, fitting Ag into existing curricula, the Ag Treasure Chest, and pilot sites for Ag in the Classroom. The workshop participants will be instrumental in staff development for the Ag in the Classroom Pilot Program.

So far, Connecticut has already set up 10 pilot program sites for 4th through 6th graders. Although pilot program sites have been limited, Duncan expects the program to expand rapidly. He said, "We have at least 25 sites interested in participating in the pilot program."

Through pre- and post-testing, the pilot program will be monitored to discover the aspects of the program that are most beneficial. Pilot teachers are urged to share their successful Ag teaching ideas with others to further enrich the program.

Duncan believes that teachers do not have enough room in the curriculum to make agriculture a separate subject, but that Ag fits into the curriculum. He said, "You can develop a unit combining agriculture and math, language, social studies or science skills. This way, Ag becomes much more real to the student."

Duncan is optimistic and enthusiastic about Connecticut's program and sees the advantage of following many other states in this endeavor. "We're at a great advantage. We have all the things other states have done—so we don't have to reinvent the wheel."

Connecticut Ag originated 9 months ago under the guidance of the Connecticut Farm Bureau and the Connecticut Department of Agriculture. Since then, the Connecticut Joint Council on Economic Education (CJCEE) has submitted a proposal to Connecticut Ag in the Classroom to undertake the program. The proposal was accepted and CJCEE is now leading the program under the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's guidance. CJCEE's reputation throughout Connecticut is highly beneficial in disseminating information about Ag in the Classroom.

Agriculture generates \$500 million in Connecticut each year. It is important for Connecticut students to learn the vital role agriculture plays in their state. Starting this year, they will. The Connecticut Ag in the Classroom program, which is supported by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture and the Connecticut Department of Education, will provide teachers with ideas for teaching agriculture through the existing curriculum.

Connecticut Ag is especially proud of its Treasure Chest, a resource for teachers and children. The Treasure Chest was formed with the assistance of Dr. Barbara Koech, formerly of the University of Massachusetts. "She helped us select the core of materials to use," says Duncan, "but it's uniquely Connecticut!" Items in the Connecticut Treasure Chest include booklets, comic books, a film on the Meat Industry, a slide presentation of Connecticut products, and Food Bytes—computer software games to enhance science, health, language and social studies. The resources contribute to teaching children about meat production, Christmas tree forestry, and egg and dairy production, all of which are found in Connecticut.

## The Northeastern Regional Meeting

Approximately 40 people representing Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Rhode Island, and New York are expected to attend the Northeastern Regional meeting March 12th and 13th in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

In an effort to establish stronger lines of communication and reduce duplication of effort, representatives will be joining forces to lay the foundation for a regional consortium for Ag in the Classroom. Some topics that will be discussed at the meeting are instructional materials, teacher training and regional funding. William Annis of New Hampshire said, "New England itself is smaller than many states; we need to explore ideas for the foundation of a consortium to increase communication."

Connecticut state contact Fifi Scoufopolos, who attended last year's meeting in Maine, said, "It's a

marvelous opportunity for idea exchange, for example—regional funding. There are many things that we can do together and share."

Al Bettencourt of Rhode Island views the meeting as a way for states to assist one another in establishing a strong Ag in the Classroom network. He said, "I think it's the way to go. I would like to see a program, but we need to work out a lot of ideas to get the program off the ground."

Susan Robertson, of the host state New Hampshire, also sees the meeting as a means to share ideas, materials and experiences. "Last year was a very productive year, and we're excited to be hosting the meeting this year in Portsmouth," Robertson said.

If you would like to attend the Northeastern Regional Meeting, contact Susan Robertson (603) 224-1934.

## Fun Food Facts

Did you know more than 4,500 new food products are introduced each year in the United States? Or that for every 3,500 calories you consume and don't use, you gain a pound?

These are but two of the dozens of facts included in a unique poster designed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help children learn about food and stay fit.

The poster, "Food and Fitness—An Everyday Event," resembles a 365-day calendar. "We hope the poster will remind everyone to use this country's wealth of food and fitness opportunities to their advantage—every single day," said Orville G. Bentley, assistant secretary for Science and Education.

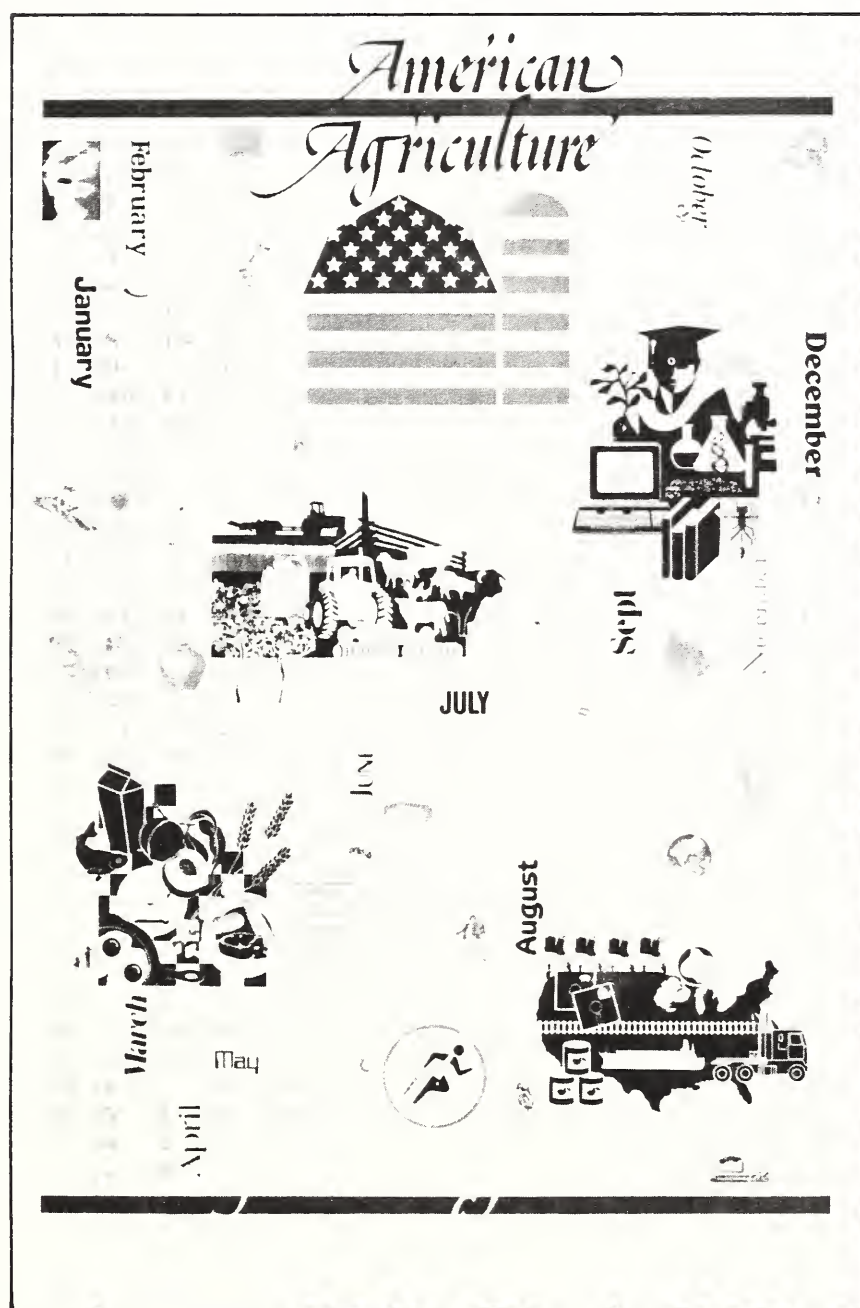
The colorfully illustrated poster mentions every major food and fiber commodity and highlights "Research and Education," the foundations of food and fiber knowledge in our country; "Food Production," including fiber and forestry; and "Marketing," including product distribution.

The poster is a product of USDA's Food and Fitness Program. USDA launched the program in 1983 to increase Americans' awareness of the abundance and variety of food produced in the United States and the relationship of diet and exercise to good health.

USDA's Extension Service is the lead agency for Food and Fitness. State and county staffs within the nationwide Cooperative Extension System plan and carry out educational activities at the local level.

The poster, which measures 23-1/2 inches by 35-1/2 inches, is available for \$5.50 from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

**NOTE TO READERS:** For more information on the Food and Fitness Program, contact Bonnie Tanner, executive director, USDA Food and Fitness Program, Room 3438, South Building, Washington, D.C. 20250, phone (202) 447-8855; or call your local Extension Office.



The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

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